

In spite of the emphatic protest of Mr. Inc Mosely in regard to the invulnerability of his affections, it was quite noticeable that, having mounted the steps, he took the opportunity of surveying his warlike undersize in the short mirror of the ranch window and actually passed his short fingers through his scanty looks as he sank down in the luxurious reclining chair. A small hand-brechief with polks dots—one of those delicate trifies that femininity affects—was crumpled up in the fur of the great buffalo robs. The took it up carelessly. It was redolent of a delicate perfume and pleasantly suggested the owner. He raised it reverently to his lips.

"We don't get very much of this bisness in our profession," he soliloquized, "but it's humanisin and makes a man remember who he is."

ber who be in"

He became strangely quiet, and his rd, steel blue eyes took on a softer look

He became strangely quiet, and his hard, steel blue eyes took on a softer look as the faint odor woke a chord of his memory. What was it about the seent of those orange blossoms that took him back in the past? He saw an old plantation house and its outlying fields of corn and cotton. The moon rose softly over the bayon, tipping the low porch with black and silver.

Who was that standing in the shadow there, the vines of the trellis drifting in patches over her fair young face? And who that young fellow, small of stature, but lithe and active, slipping upon the little hand a circlet of gold beneath the pale moon's glamour? Ah, yes, it was all past long ago! There was a small green mound out by the lagoon which the "sentimel cypress tree stands over." And the willows walled a low dirge by the hurrying stream. It was all gone long ago! But somehow the rough sheriff, for all his brusqueness, found the sunlight too strong for his eyes again, even upon the shady veranda, and shielded them against it with his heavy hat brim.

A step on the porch recalled him. It was Henry Bruce. He came toward him

A step on the porch recalled him. It was Henry Bruce. He came toward him with an outstretched hand and a frank

with an outstretched hand and a frank greeting.

"Well, well, Sheriff Mosely, glad to see you've got over our way at last," he said cordially, with a hearty handshake.

"Which way this time?"

"On the way hum now," Mosely rejoined, returning the grip with sinews of steel. "Badly done up, too, and gen'rally knocked out by the experience of the last three weeks. Me and my two depyties her been down on the stage road, layin far road agints day and night. We had a brush with 'em night afore last and done pretty well, but Humly Jim got a bullet through his hand, and Jake Sharp lost a finger. I sin't been in a bed fur a flog's age."

"Any one killed?" inquired Bruce, sowing the sheriff's delicate habit of colding the fatal details in these mid-

"Lessee!" said Mr. Mosely, putting his rently indulging in a sincere effort memory. "I disremember exactly hether it was three or five of them felers passed in his chips. I got two, I mow, with thet new self cockin colt's ole man Dallas give me. Geewhittaker! but thet are a pretty boy to shoot, natch'ally—beats the ole fashion of fillin the tumbler all to death. Humly Jim called one chap in with his winchester called one chap in with his winchester—
the best line runnin shot I ever see—by
good luck it was the one who winged
him. And, Jake, how many did you git,
Jake" he inquired, as the two deputies
lounged slowly up the steps of the porch
and perched on the low railing.

"None," said Jake sullenly. "Not a
mother's son as I knows on. My hand
was bleedin so like all possessed that I
hedn't any use fur a 6-shooter."

was bleedin so like all possessed that I hedn't any use fur a 6-shooter."

He exhibited the stump of his finger, bandaged in a bloody rag. It was now apparent that Humly Jim had also suffered in the night encounter. His left arm was worn in a sling.

"Ef this yer foolishness continners," remarked Mr. Mosely in a disgusted tone, surveying his wounded subordinates, "the gals in this country will hev to put on their spectacles to find a sound, ablebodied man into it. They ain't a fightin man in Oskaloo thet's got the average allowance of fingers and toes. Some's without ears, and they's a few"—chuckling softly to hisnas!—"es is losin heir hair, but the majority o' them are married."

As the sheriff concincled he gravely uncovered his scant; bolts and rubbed his bald pate with his cal bandana. "N-n-nobody can a-alow thet a gal re-

lieved you o' y-y-yourn," stammered Humly Jim with a spasm of merriment as malevolent as the laugh of a hyena. "Not much!" said the sheriff shortly.

"Not much!" said the sheriff shortly. "They was a gal once who was a little soft on me, and she said to me, 'Oh, how I wish I hed your hair!' I hed more of the article then than I have now," Mr. Mossly remarked apologatically. "She said that from a spirit o' gush, I reckon, but meanin it all the same, ye know. However, I didn't cottom. I suspicioned that gall to hev designs on my futur state and reckoned I'd give her a hint that I was onto it. "Sal," set I, 'ye can't how my scalp nohow, much as ye saimire it." The never had much to say to me arter that."

"To change the subject somewhat,

"To change the subject somewhat, intlamen, from the fair sex to more tal interests," put in Henry Bruce, "I ar your labors are not yet over. I surised Lem Wickson and his gang this orning engaged in their old pastime of og hunting on my range. The hoge by were shooting belonged to Alcides allas and had his road brand. They ere over by the 'soldier's water hole' a the Twin divides."

"We don't say!" said Mosely, rising

'e don't say!" said Mosely, rising his elbow excitedly as he received intelligence. "Is it possible them a use in that bus'ness yet? They be hankerin fur a term in jail at Post, and Lam. I reckon, is lookin

forward to bein the principal figure in one o' them 'necktie matinees' thet I've presided at more frequent lately than I hev any use fur. Lenstwise thet's wot he'll hev to attend of he keeps on with his hoss stealin."

"I'm too tuckered out jest now," continued lke, sinking back in his chair with an air of fatigue, "and my possy is too badly used up to push things right away. I'll hev to enter a "nolly prosequy" fur the present. But, howsumever," said he, rising up again excitedly and laying a significant hand on his revolver, "I'll run thet Lem Wickson down afore I'm a month older, or my name's not Mosely. Thet man is gettin on the inside track of my moral principles by his impudence, and thet's suthin I won't allow no one to do. Besides, I owe thet much to Allsides himself."

Sheriff Mosely's righteous outburst of

Sheriff Mosely's righteous outburst of indignation was interrupted by the sound of footsteps and voices as Mrs. Kernochan and Miss Stafford came out upon the veranda. The usual courte were exchanged, the bluff sheriff exhibiting an offhand gallantry in meeting the ladies which invariably surprised those who knew the man and the rough duties of his calling. Far different was the bearing of the deputies, Jake Sharp and Humly Jim, who were instantly surprised into that uncouthness which overtakes the uncultured male animal in the presence of beauty and refinement. They descended abruptly from their perches, executed the customary awk-ward salutation and then, climbing back upon the railing from sheer embarrase ment, were overcome by a painful si-lence and a conviction of being all hands

"You were speaking of Alcides Dallas, Mr. Mosely," Mrs. Kernochan remarked, sitting down in one of the large old fash-ioned rockers. "How is that queer old man and his quaint little daughter? Does be entertain visitors as much as eyer with his bewildering music upon the vio-

"Having just returned from a profes-sional visit down in the lower country, can't really say just how they are gettin on over by the Colorado," replied the sheriff, with a humorous twinkle of his blue eye that showed he appreciated the lady's comment, "but I suppose the usual overtures to courtship and matri-mony are still in order. By the way, are you ladies aware that there is to be a ball given at San Marcus immediately after the spring roundups? It can't be more than a fortnight away, and such another opportunity for a stranger in the Lone Star to witness the gayeties of the season is not often afforded. You must ask Mr. Bruce to escort you," turning to Miss Stafford.

to Miss Stafford.

"A ball" exclaimed the fair Edith.
who had been leaning against a pillar of
the veranda listening listlessly to the
previous conversation, "a genuine frontier merrymaking such as I have heard
so much about? That is delightful! I
must see it by all means! You will take
me, Hal, of course?"



"A ball" exclaimed the fair Edith. "I suppose so," replied Bruce in rather a heaitating tone on being thus directly appealed to. "I hope you won't think me rude, Edith, but the fact is I have already part way committed myself in regard to that affair."

"And to whom, pray?" inquired Edith, raising her pretty brows in the completeness of her surprise. "What siren has anticipated me in this request, I should

"Ob, it's a little favor Miss Dallas re-quested during my visit there," Bruce responded carelessly enough. "I'm sorry these engagements conflict, however. What do you think I'd better do about it?" "Do about it?" returned Miss Stafford,

with a proud toss of her head. "Why, you'll take me of course. You'll write Miss Dallas a note—I'll write it for you if it's too much bother—in which you'll my that your dest duty is with your quest, and that she won't release you under any circumstances. I won't! I think that disposes of the matter very satisfactorily," she concluded, with a certain triumphant smile of superiority which would have charmed the absent Cynthia had she been privileged to wit-

"I'm afraid Cynthia will regard that as coming with a very ill grace from me," Bruce rejoined, as if thinking aloud. "However, there is considerable

aloud. "However, there is considerable force in what you say. By the way, sheriff," he said suddenly as Mr. Mosely rose with a quick glance at the sun, as if about to take his departure, "do you happen to be going in the direction of the 'Dallas ranch?"

"Well, I do happen to be ridin that way," Mosely replied. "I was about to say, ladies, that I regret professional duties will prevent my offering my personal services in the present emergency." The sheriff belonged to that recognized class of individuals whose vocabulary improves with their surroundings. "But that being, unfortunately, out of the proves with their surroundings. "But that being, unfortunately, out of the question, Mr. Bruce, if I can take any message to Miss Cynthia or do you any other favor, I'm here to do it!"

"No message is necessary—thanks!" Bruce rejoined in rather an emphatic tone, "and I feel a natural reluctance about making the request I do. The fact is I think a guitar would be such an improvement upon that poor, weather beaten banjo Miss Dallas possesses that I
should like to send her my own. I think,
with her knowledge of the banjo, she
will readily learn to play upon it. But
it's an awkward thing to carry in the
saddle, sheriff."

strument enveloped in a green baise case.
"They'll take me for a traveling minstrel show this time, sure enough,"
laughed Ike, passing the attached ribbe
deftly over his shoulder.

deftly over his shoulder.

"Rather a dangerous one to interfere with, though," commented Mrs. Kernochan, with a gesture indicative of his revolvers, contrasting strangely with the suggestion of the troubadour at his back.

"They don't tally very well together, that's a fact!" said Ike, glancing down, "but I'm equally prepared now, you see, for peace or war. Well, goodby, ladies. I must be off. It's a long ride yet to Oskaloo. Come, boys!" and baring his kaloo. Come, boys!" and baring his bald brow in a sweeping salutation the sheriff was off to the gate with his quick, nervous stride.

Jake Sharp and Humly Jim dropped down from the railing of the veranda, like a pair of rusty coated crows which had been spending the interval in quiet and gloomy communion upon some con-venient fence. With bows that were phenomenal for their awkward originality they slouched away after their chief.

There was a leisurely adjusting of girth and stirrup at the rancho gate, a hurried scramble into the saddle and an abrupt departure. Smithareens developing some eccentricity—possibly owing to the strange burden her rider bore—called for a display of horsemanship on the part of the sheriff, which was promptly responded to with whip and spur. This incident awoke the latent humor and merriment of the two deputies. At last, with loud laughter, a clatter of hoofs and an accompanying cloud of dust the cavalcade got fairly under way. In a few moments their mounted figures were scarcely discernible amid the lengthening shadows of the valley.

CHAPTER VIII.

The gracious springtime lingered lovingly in the valley of the Colorado. Nowhere had its advent been more welcome, nowhere more apparent its trans-forming changes. Amid weeks of bril-liant sunlight and odorous breezes and the tuneful improvising of mating mocking birds the glad days came and went.

From twilight to twilight the sun smiled benignly down from out the cloudless benignly down from out the cloudless blue, and the earth, tropical with flow-ers and verdure, accepted gratefully his benediction. It was early in May. The year's resurrection was complete. The prairie dogs bestirred themselves mer-rily about their noisy housekeeping and chid the jocund season with their shrill clamor. And even the dismal violin playing of the elder Dallas seemed to thrill at times with accents of joy.

One day, as if in answer to the old man's invocation, the "Dallas range" awoke to life and animation. Troops of cattle thundered through the little valley, driven on by bands of horsamen, and converging upon a large pen at its upper end. The air was full of the cries of lowing kine, the bleating of calves and the shorts of nursuing cowhove. and the shouts of pursuing cowboys.

The plain was picturesque with the evolutions of the outriders, goading the terror stricken bands and throwing the un erring lasso. The advance guard of the "spring roundups" had reached the dwelling of the elder Dallas. The business of branding calves and "cutting out" the various owners' property had begun. In haste the aged cattle owner discarded his fiddle, resumed his knee boots, and mounting his sturdy cow pony joined the boisterous cavalcade.

But the days passed drearily for Cyn-thia. She took no interest in the varied features of the roundup. The bursts of speed between the rival horsemen, the exciting chase of some refractory steer, the skillful cast of the sinuous lariat, the shock and triumph of each sharp en-counter—scenes familiar to her indeed, and in which she herself, mounted upon her fleet little cow pony, had often formed a conspicuous figure, compelling the admiration of these centaurs of the rein—these she witnessed with a listless eye or did not regard at all. And if the exciting chase interested her not, certainly still less the more prosaic details of throwing and branding the unfortunate calves, the cries of the tortured cattle and the enumerating of the year's in-

In all of these interesting particulars the elder Dallas manifested a keen delight, exhibiting a skill in horsemanship that those who were familiar with his usual rheumatic mode of progression could scarcely credit. He brought home with him to dinner at odd times certain of the "likeliest" of his comparisons. of the "likeliest" of his companio large limbed, deep chested sons of the saddle-introducing them to his charming daughter with a paternal flourish and ing daughter with a paternal flourish and hopeful manner that gave place to a mystified wonder when he noted the apathy of Cynthia's greeting. He had anticipated no small degree of gratitude for the opportunity thus afforded of displaying her fascinations and had congratulated himself in advance upon the savoo she would accomplish in a community where the very scarcity of the fair sex makes their advances irresisti-

But all these air castles of the elder Dallas were doomed to speedy over-throw. To one and all Cynthia preserved a consistent attitude of calm indifference. The meal progressed in grave silence. The infrequent conversation had no lighter topic than the incidents of the roundup, and when at its close the admiring Alcides suggested: "Ye might bring out yer banjo and shake it up for the boys a little. Show 'em jes natch'ally what a stunner ye are at pickin it," this accomplished performer replied with an excuse or instant ly escaped to the seclusion of her own little room, whereupon the embarrassed But all these air castles of the elder little room, whereupon the embarrassed cowmen were compelled to endure an onslaught upon the violin that should have caused the embowering live oaks to

rise and mutiny. But Cynthia went her way and fol-lowed the dictates of her singular humor. Aulus and the fawn usually accompa-nied her in these lonely wanderings.

"Bless your soul, man, don't let that worry you!" exclaimed Mr. Mosely; "ef there's a strap or band about it, I'll pack it as easily as of it were a grip sack. Let's have it at once!"

Thus urged. Bruce stepped quickly into the house, returning with the instrument enveloped in a green baise case.

"They'll take me for a traveling min"the ear of the sagacious hound that lay at her feet, with his devoted eyes fixed ever upon her face, what thoughts of hers may have been detected by the antelope that drowsed away the long hours thus consecrated to her woodland reveries, have never been divulged by these most worthy confidents. And if the grave pines that bent so reverently about their little devotes divined aught of her disquietude they only grew the graver for the knowledge and dropped a cone now and then in their still depths a woodland tear of sympathy. And at such moments the river far below lifted a soft consolstory murmur that stole

upon her silent musing.

For I fear our little Cynthia was but learning the story which, if we are to believe the poets, the vast panorams of nature has been telling "since first the flight of years began." A sudden lone-liness had come upon her in the midst of her pastimes and occupations. A strange voice whispered in her heart. The things which satisfied once had lost their charm somehow; the tones of her banjo were harsh and discordant; the fawn had less of grace; even her beloved Aulus was often stupid and unsatisfying.

At times the preoccupied Miss Dallas turned her footsteps in quite another direction. She developed a fascination for a certain ledge of rocks upon the crest of a western divide. It was a bare, uninteresting spot, without shade or shelter, and, but for the prospect it afforded of the valley on either side, a poor place certainly to pass one's time. Yet Cyn-thia was much given to haunting this locality. A superficial observer might have surmised that she sought this lofty post of observation the more closely to note the varied maneuvers of the roundup in the plain below, but unfortunately for this theory the back of the fair observer was invariably turned upon this animated spectacle.

Who shall say what disappointments were hers, thus occupied in spying out the land? Who shall say how many times this self appointed Sister Anne be-held the cloud of dust upon the distant horison disclose not the expected horsemen, but the invariable flock of sheep, or how many times some roving mustang raised a tumultuous flutter in that little breast that not a whole caballada of his wild eyed comrades might have caused by the maddest of their onsets? Yet even in this hopeless reconnoitering the days sped on and on, and the anticipated horseman never came.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

Magistrate - Then you admit having struck your wife on the head with a chair so violently that the chair was broken?

Prisoner—Yes, your worship.

Magistrate—Well, are you at least sorry

for what you have done?

Prisoner—Certainly. The chair was as good as new.—Modernes Leben.

The Indication. "This bump," said the phrenologist, "in-

sition." "No," said the subject. "It indicates that my wife is of a combative disposition. That's where she hit me with a hairbrush this morning."—Harper's Bazar.

Fixed. "Swikes, is that you? I never saw you with a beard before."
"How do like it, Swilkins?"

"Don't like it at all. It doesn't become

"That's what everybody says."
"Why don't you shave it off?"
(With a heavy sigh) "I wish I could,
swilkins, but I've just had my photograph taken for my Columbian exposition pass. Got to wear this beard for six months—darn it!"—Chicago Tribune.

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